

**Claims:**

Please amend claim 9 and cancel claims 12, 14, 16, and 18 as follows.

1-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) A method of consistently producing quality meat products by managing growth of a plurality of animals through a growth management program, the method comprising the steps of:

establishing standards for participation in the program, the standards including -  
initiation standards including a minimum birth weight, and  
growth standards including a minimum twelfth week weight, a minimum  
seventeenth week weight, and a minimum growth rate;  
admitting into the program only animals that meet the initiation standards;  
tracking each animal's growth; and  
culling out animals who fail to meet the growth standards.

10. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 9, wherein the initiation standards include a minimum birth weight.

11. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 10, wherein the minimum birth weight is approximately eighty-five pounds.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 9 ~~claim 12~~, wherein the minimum twelfth week weight is approximately two hundred pounds.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 9 ~~claim 14~~, wherein the minimum seventeenth week weight is approximately three hundred pounds.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 9 ~~claim 16~~, wherein the minimum growth rate is approximately two and one half pounds per day.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 9 ~~claim 18~~, wherein the growth protocol includes requirements concerning types of feed given to the animals.

20. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 9 ~~claim 18~~, wherein the growth protocol includes requirements concerning vaccinations given to the animals.